OpenVMS Technical Journal

Ask the Wizard

Stephen Hoffman, Senior Member Technical Staff
OpenVMS Engineering Group

The OpenVMS "Ask The Wizard" (ATW) area is an informal forum where you can ask questions about OpenVMS and HP Layered Products and Software.   "Ask The Wizard" contains nearly 10,000 questions and answers on a wide range of OpenVMS topics, including IP printing topics, procedures for resetting the host name or host address, and other OpenVMS and layered product discussions.

Although questions arrive continuously at ATW, the answers are posted in batches, with a general goal of posting once a month. Longer intervals between postings are certainly possible.

If you require the absolute certainty of an answer, a quick answer, or a response by telephone, contact the Customer Support Center directly; use the more formal problem escalation channels that your question deserves. ATW is intended as an informal resource and not as a replacement for the expertise of the Customer Support Center.

The ATW area is available at:

http://www.hp.com/go/openvms/wizard

You will know that you are on the right page if you see the photo of the Wizard (the Wooly Mammoth) busily answering questions.

On the main ATW page, you will find a list of links to topics like "OpenVMS information", "Evolving business value" and "Test Drive OpenVMS" on the left-hand Navigation bar. Directly beneath the "Overview" in the middle of the page is a link to the OpenVMS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. Under the FAQ link is an area to ask questions and search the previous answers. Beneath this area is a long list of previously-asked questions and answers. These resources taken together will answer most common questions.

As of this writing, there are four keystone topics listed at ATW:

- (1020) general IP printing, and HP printer blank pages

- (1661) memory management, application synchronization,
   and common coding errors

- (6776) resolving the access violation (ACCVIO) error

- (7552) general application debugging

These questions arise regularly, so they are highlighted on the ATW page.

On the ATW page, you will typically find several months worth of questions and answers, and links to archives of older questions and answers. Each of the questions and answers has a searchable

title and an associated unique identifying topic number in parenthesis. There is a third number visible with each question, the posting order.

You will also find three search functions— one that uses an HP search engine, one that uses a local HP OpenVMS "Ask The Wizard" search function, and a third that performs a topic-number-specific search which finds a topic by its topic number, with or without parenthesis. You can use any or all of these searches, or you can choose to search the ATW site with Google or another external search tool.

At the bottom of the page, you will find a zip file containing all of the questions and answers, with current updates. Older questions are occasionally updated, so the entire zip archive is rebuilt each time a batch of questions and answers is posted.

> http://h71000.www7.hp.com/wizard/wizard.zip

Within answers to some questions you will see references to existing discussions. For example, printing-related questions often cite topic (1020). You can locate topic (1020) by finding it in the roughly-monthly batches of questions, by the topic number search engine mentioned earlier, or by noticing the format of the URLs used for topics. For instance:

> http://h71000.www7.hp.com/wizard/wiz_1020.html

refers to topic 1020.

The OpenVMS Wizard is well aware of hyperlinks and href tags and such, and would certainly welcome the addition of this support at the website. That written, the Wizard also has code to write and features to develop for OpenVMS releases.

If you wish to ask the Wizard a question, there is a link in the middle of the ATW page for this purpose. As a prolog to asking the question, you will see an explanation of the ATW area, as well as a list of general rules for asking your question.

As an example of a question that occasionally arises, assume that you want to find the log specification of a batch job, from within the batch job. You can use either of the two keyword search engines to look for queue or log, or you can search for titles containing queue-related discussions. In this latter case, one such match you might find is topic (9130), $GETQUI LOG_SPECIFICATION?, which provides you with the following DCL:

```
$ log_specification=f$getqui("display_job","log_specification",,"this_job")
$ IF log_specification.EQS."".AND.-
        NOT.f$getqui("display_job","job_log_null",,"this_job")
$ THEN
    $   log_specification=f$parse("",-
        f$getqui("display_job","job_name",,"this_job"),"sys$login:.log")
$ ENDIF
```

This code generates the batch log specification for the currently-executing batch job.

In a topic such as (9130), you will find pointers to other existing discussions of the F$GETQUI DCL lexical function, the SYS$GETQUI system service, and related features, including topics: (813), (1240), (2159), (3951), (4546), (4568), (4903), (5188), (5471), (5567), (5651), (5793), (5982), (6315), (6877), and (9130).

The OpenVMS Wizard looks forward to your questions, and hopes that you find OpenVMS and "Ask The Wizard" valuable, and that this article helps you more effectively use ATW.